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TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Gaza Disengagement

Key stories in the media:

Jerusalem Post quoted senior diplomatic officials as saying that the Prime Minister's Office is hoping that, in addition to pressing the PA to rein in the escalating violence, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will also give PM Sharon a domestic boost by reaffirming the letter President Bush gave him in 2004 in response to the disengagement plan.

Jerusalem Post quoted FM Silvan Shalom as saying Tuesday that Palestinian terrorism could disrupt disengagement.

The major story in the media: On Tuesday, thousands of police officers, soldiers, and Border Police officers encircled the village of Kfar Maimon in the Negev, where police estimated 7,000 anti-disengagement protesters spent the night (according to other assessments, up to 20,000 demonstrators are at the site). Hatzofe banners: "Kfar Maimon -- Capital of Orange." Leading media quoted leaders of the Yesha Council of Jewish Settlements in the Territories as saying they would resume the pullout protest march toward the Gaza Strip settlement bloc of Gush Katif, which police have prohibited. This morning, Israel Radio reported that the Yesha Council settlers and the police reached an agreement, according to which the sides would not resort to violence. The radio cited an announcement by the Yesha Council, according to which most demonstrators would leave and only a few hundred would remain on the site.

Leading media reported that the Knesset will vote today on a one-month delay of the disengagement. The media reported that Finance Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has decided to absent himself from the vote, and that two Knesset members of the government coalition's United Torah Judaism will vote in favor of the postponement. Major media say that the bill is not expected to pass. Ha'aretz quoted Yuval Steinitz (Likud), chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, as saying that he will continue to support the disengagement weakly, but that he believes Israel now needs to retake the Gaza Strip.

Jerusalem Post reported that several thousand people jammed a busy midtown Manhattan street Tuesday afternoon for a prayer, song, and protest rally against withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. The demonstration was organized largely by the Lubavitch youth organization.

Leading media reported that on Tuesday, the IDF shot dead two senior Islamic Jihad militants, the brothers Ibrahim and Warad Abanrah, who had been wanted for four years.

Israel Radio reported that two mortar shells were launched at a southern Gaza Strip settlement this morning.

Ha'aretz and Maariv quoted Uzi Rubin, former head of the Defense Ministry department responsible for ballistic missiles, as saying Tuesday before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the Arab countries surrounding Israel have some 1,000

missiles that can fire a total of some 500 tons of explosives at any spots in the country.

Leading media quoted Shin Bet head Avraham Diskin as saying at a closed session of the Knesset's Interior Committee that 11 percent of the Palestinians involved in terror entered Israel through the process known as family unification.

Israel Radio reported that the left-wing forum Mate Harov ("Majority's Coalition") will post pro-disengagement PR teams at 200 junctions around the country.

Israel Radio reported that, under Egyptian mediation, Fatah and Hamas have decided to bring their clashes in the Gaza Strip to an end. The media reported that 15 to 23 Palestinians were wounded in the confrontations between the factions on Tuesday.

Leading media reported that A-G Menachem Mazuz insists that Sharon's son, MK Omri Sharon, spend time in prison over his involvement in the 1999 Likud primaries affair.

Jerusalem Post and Ha'aretz reported that a representative of the Shi'ite Hizbullah and Amal factions (the independent Fawzi Salukh, according to Jerusalem Post) will be named foreign minister in Lebanon's new government. Jerusalem Post says that the cabinet includes one Hizbullah member, Muhammad Fneish, who will be the new energy minister.

Ha'aretz, Yediot, and Jerusalem Post quoted prominent Syrian journalist Ali Jamalo, director of the Damascus-based Champress Web site (www.champress.net) as saying on Tuesday that the Hebrew version of the site would be available for surfers within six weeks. Jerusalem Post says that Jamalo has close links to the Syrian government. One of the new site's stated purposes is to "fight the great ignorance among Hebrew speakers regarding all aspects of Syria."

Leading media quoted London Mayor Ken Livingstone as saying on Tuesday, in an interview with the British Sky News-TV, that Likud and Hamas are "two sides of the same coin." He expressed understanding for the motivations of Palestinian suicide bombers. Jerusalem Post quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev as saying: "It is a pity he made no differentiation between murderous terrorists and between those trying to protect innocent civilians against the terrorists."

Gaza Disengagement:

Summary:

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "It's better for the police and IDF to realize there is only one way to implement their decisions: with force, determination, and all the means available to them. Just as the police and armies of other democratic countries do when the rabble threatens to topple them."

Veteran op-ed writer and the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assistant Eytan Haber opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Just one hasty decision by either the demonstrators or the security forces is enough to lead the genie, which has already been let out his bottle, to civil war, brother against brother. God save us."

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Whatever Sharon's failings, the onus today is on his opponents."

Matti Golan, former editor-in chief of Ha'aretz and business daily Globes, maintained in Globes: "We ought to hear ... an explicit, clear statement that whatever may happen, Israel won't return to Gaza."

Block Quotes:

1I. "Let the Police Win"
Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (July

20): "Less than a month before the withdrawal from Gaza, it's hard to hold out hope that the security forces are indeed capable of implementing the meticulously developed operational plans. But this should not divert attention away from the mass violation of the law [by disengagement opponents] that took place on Tuesday. The participation of thousands of declared criminals in an event the police proscribed does not make it legal, but rather a display of rabble that adopted for itself, out of habit, supremacy over the law.... The government of Israel doesn't have the right to allow such public, caustic crushing of its orders and authority. The illusion that it's possible to preserve democracy via negotiations with known criminals has once again dissipated. The sight of police officers standing empty-handed across from a hostile mob is one that Israeli society, in this most delicate situation, must not permit itself. It's better for the police and IDF to realize there is only one way to implement their decisions: with force, determination, and all the means available to them. Just as the police and armies of other democratic countries do when the rabble threatens to topple them."

II. "A Tragedy Unfolding Before Our Eyes"

Veteran op-ed writer and the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assistant Eytan Haber opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (July 20): "Now [Ariel Sharon's] best students are rising up against their rabbi, justifying the excellent grades they received on their report cards.... In this fulminating atmosphere, with the emotional temperature continuing to rise, someone is going to die. If, heaven forbid, it is a member of the security forces, all of the dams will burst and then one would be better off not even accidentally being in the settler camp. A disaster of that kind will result in a complete divorce of the secular camp from those who are convinced that they are the best of the younger generation. If, heaven forbid, one of the demonstrators and/or settlers should die, the disengagement plan could die -- and then we will all pay a high international price. There is no need for a series of mistakes (which have already been made) to heat up the atmosphere. Just one hasty decision by either the demonstrators or the security forces is enough to lead the genie, which has already been let out his bottle, to civil war, brother against brother. God save us."

III. "Marching on Gaza"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (July 20): "As this newspaper has been stressing for many months, no small amount of blame for the escalating level of internal dissent falls on the Prime Minister himself.... Yet whatever Sharon's failings, the onus today is on his opponents.... A minority of disengagement opponents are prepared to do whatever it takes.... It is not too late for wisdom to prevail. The Council [of Jewish Settlements in the Territories] kept the marchers in place in Kfar Maimon through the day Tuesday.... Hopefully, this step may allow cool heads to prevail, and responsible voices -- public figures as well as spiritual leaders, particularly those who either oppose or are unenthusiastic about disengagement -- to emphasize and reemphasize the insistence that the anti-disengagement struggle must not deteriorate into violence. They must clearly define the limits of civil disobedience, and insure that it does not veer into the all-out confrontation and lawlessness that would tear apart the social cohesion and the democracy that are integral to the very existence of Israel."

IV. "Back to Gaza?"

Matti Golan, former editor-in chief of Ha'aretz and business daily Globes, maintained in Globes (July 20): "Everything we are observing now -- the demonstrations, the clashes, the unrest, the huge financial expenditures -- could be in vain. Is this the government's policy indeed?.... If terror takes place after the disengagement, is there a possibility that Israel could return to the [Gaza] Strip? It currently is key question.... If this possibility does exist, it would be important to know about it. This is definitely something that could change many people's opinion regarding the merit of the disengagement plan.... If this is not true, we ought to hear about it -- in an explicit, clear statement that whatever may happen, Israel won't return to Gaza. If we don't hear this, even before the disengagement, the public will know it has fallen victim to deception by politicians, who act out interests that have nothing to do with the good of the state and its citizens."

